NAQCC News

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1. DECEMBER SPRINT: First an excerpt from an email from Mike N5JKY about our sprints - ".....I'm also going to do the NAQCC sprints, but I'm limited to every other month since Wednesday night is not possible for me." This is exactly why we do our sprints on alternating Tuesday and Wednesday evenings. If we did them every Wednesday evening for example, any member who is 'tied up' every Wednesday evening with another commitment (choir practice, tennis match, etc.) could never experience the joy of participating in our sprints. This way, most members can at least participate in half our sprints.

A shudder goes through my body as I think about our upcoming sprint this Tuesday evening local time which is Wednesday 0130-0330Z time. Why? Well, traditionally our December sprint is one of the poorest of each year with participation down and poor conditions. Hopefully this year will be different as we would love to continue our streak of 100+ logs sprints yet another month. Please get on if you can, and if conditions are poor, stick it out long enough to at least make a few QSO's and report your results. Let's keep the streak going and show the ham radio world how popular CW still is and how efficient a mode it is, even with poor conditions and QRP power levels.

Or maybe my foreboding will be in error, and we will have our usual great participation AND conditions will be very good. That's the fun of ham radio. Just like the weather, no matter how much we know about meteorology or about radio propagation, neither the weather nor specific propagation can be predicted completely accurately. You can make broad general predictions with some accuracy, but that's about it. So again please check in on the sprint and see what the 'propagation gods' have to offer us this month.

It's great that our sprints are becoming so popular that our members are starting to ask little points of order about them. One member from Washington, DC asked via Rick AA4W what the status of DC is in our sprints. Well in most contests, DC is considered part of the ARRL section

of Maryland-DC or MDC and counts as Maryland. In checking GenLog, it does list DC as a separate multiplier (for our sprints) if you use the latest version of the program and the latest version of the naqcc.dat file that is available via the General Sprint Rules page on our NAQCC web site. So the bottom line is that DC is a separate multiplier in our sprints.

If you are entering one of our sprints for the first time, we welcome you and hope you will be a regular participant from now on. We have a nice certificate for the member with the best first-timer score.

Remember to be sure to read and understand the full general sprint rules and any specific rules for this month's sprint here.

2. NOVEMBER CHALLENGE RESULTS: There are still a few hours left before the submission deadline for the November challenge reports. We've gotten 13 reports so far from KB1PBA, RW3AI, K3WWP, VE3FUJ, KD6SX, K1IEE, KQ1P, AF4LB, W2JEK, W8TAF, N8XMS, KH6OZ, WB0QQT. This is always a popular challenge each November as we give you a list of words relating to Thanksgiving to make from the letters in calls of the stations you work. It's good to see some new calls in the list of participants as more members discover the fun of our monthly challenges. Remember they are ideal for those who can't enter our sprints for any reason or maybe just don't like contests or sprints. The challenges are relaxed stress-free month long events that can be worked at one's leisure.

Full Challenge info here.

3. GENERAL CLUB NEWS:

- It's delightful to know the ARRL is finally realizing there is a resurgence in CW happening, and they've come up with something to replace in a way, the old Novice Roundup. Here's some info on it from one of our NAQCC members:

"Fellow NAQCC members, please mark December 19th 1800 UTC - 2359 UTC on your calendars as amateur operators licensed within the last three years will be participating in ARRL's first CW Rookie Roundup. We rookies need your help to support new operators by answering us when we call "CQ RR" or by calling "CQ R" looking for rookies. ARRL has already organized two SSB Rookie Roundups earlier this year with good success. The CW Rookie Roundup will only truly be successful with the help of veteran CW Ops listening for and ready to answer rookies. What could be a better way to support the CW community than by giving a helping hand to those rookies who have taken on the challenge of learning our favorite mode? You can find all the information about the contest including the exchange, suggested frequencies and methods of calling CQ here: http://www.arrl.org/rookie-roundup. Also, if you are reading this and you fall into the definition of a rookie, make sure to participate. It's a blast for everyone involved!
I hope to hear lots of fellow NAQCC members during the contest.
Thanks & 73,
Matt Wilhelm - W1MSW
NAQCC #4750"

Let's show our appreciation to the ARRL for waking up and doing this. It would be wonderful if every member could put in at least one or two hours in their event, and afterwards be sure to thank them and mention that as a NAQCC member you are grateful for their help in promoting CW again.

- A couple issues ago, we mentioned our problem of rapidly running out of web site space as our membership continues its explosive growth. Well the problem is solved now.

We now have our own domain name as - naqcc.info - and with it, 10 GB of web site space which is 1,000 times more space that we had with windstream. The site is hosted by the Go Daddy organization, one of, if not the, top domain registration organizations in the world.

The first thing we did with the extra space was revive our newsletter archive. You can now access all our newsletters starting with #042 which is when we made the transition from an email newsletter to an on-line newsletter. All are in the original .html format which reproduces much better than the off-site .pdf archive we had to use previously. As a follow up step, we hope to index the newsletters - point out the articles of interest that involve more than the routine sprint and challenge results and the like. There are some good construction articles and other good material that should be made easy to find for our members. Hopefully when we get time to complete the index, that will be the case.

Another thing we did is revive all the featured member pages. Now you can learn more about some 120 or so members who have had their pictures and bios featured on the web site in the past for one month. ALL are now available in one place on the site now for easy perusal. We've also added the Member Spotlights from the newsletters and will continue to add them after they debut in the newsletter.

There's a lot more that can be done now, and we'll tell you about it as it happens right here in upcoming newsletters.

Oh, and we can't close this item without thanking all of you who offered suggestions and even offered us web space on your servers. It was heartwarming to know so many of you care about our club.

- Just a quick reminder we're continuing with the hidden call sign idea originally suggested by Bill KB3XS. Somewhere in this newsletter is a call sign of a member in a place that is definitely out of context and containing a mix of upper and lower case letters. If it is YOUR call sign and YOU find it, email **NAQCC33@WINDSTREAM.NET** BEFORE the publication date of the next newsletter (December 25) and win a gift certificate for 100 NAQCC QSL cards produced by the CheapQSLs.com company run by Hal K6RF (#0171) and donated by the NAQCC thanks to your generous monetary donations to the club.

3a. CHAPTER NEWS:

Here is where our club chapters present news about their chapter activities. We currently have two chapters - European and Minnesota. We're looking forward to expanding that roster. Chapters are more or less independent local gatherings organized by members in a geographical area and subject to a list of guidelines under the auspices of the NAQCC. If you would be interested in starting a chapter in your area, let us know and we'll send a copy of the guidelines.

EUROPEAN CHAPTER:

Items in this section are from EU Chapter President Matt MW3YMY unless otherwise credited. Questions or comments should got to **MATT@MATTIRELAND.CO.UK**

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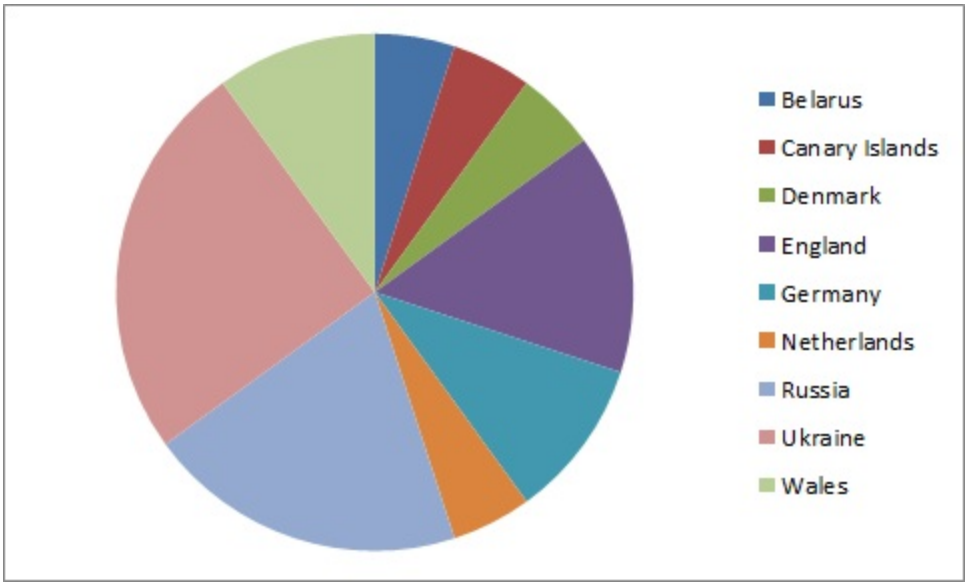
(13K)

Of the hundreds of membership applications from the recent membership drive approximately 15% were from Europe. It's great to see so many new people in the chapter and I very much hope that many of you will get a lot out of all the upcoming chapter activities.

The three European sprints so far have had a total of 20 different participants. Participants seem to be fairly evenly spread all across Europe: the following pie chart shows the proportion of total participants from each country from which logs have been submitted.



We have yet to have any trans-Atlantic QSOs, so it would be really good if any members from the USA and Canada who are able could join in a European Sprint and try and make the first one.

The sprint rules are currently available in English, Spanish (kindly translated by Baltasar, EA8BVP) and will hopefully also soon be available in Russian, so any amateur in Europe will be able to take part in the sprints, without language as a barrier.

The chapter's monthly newsletter is steadily growing. In addition to sprint results and member news, we are hoping that more members can contribute some content relating to their particular areas of expertise to make the newsletter a very enjoyable read.

As ever, any comments/suggestions/questions about the chapter are very welcome. The address is: **MATT@MATTIRELAND.CO.UK** The EU Chapter web site is at http://www.naqcc-eu.org/

MINNESOTA CHAPTER:

From Keith K0HJC #3976 - Questions or comments should got to Chapter President Rich, WD0K at WD0K@arrl.net.

Greetings from the Minnesota Chapter! The Tuesday evening sprint should see good conditions on 80 meters across the midwest, and at least six stations on from Minnesota. Our following Friday Brunch will be in Apple Valley this month. We also welcome suggestions for locations outside the Metro area for the coming months. How about a QRP Brunch after the St. Cloud and/or Buffalo Hamfests? Check the Minnesota Chapter Website at http://www.naqccmn.com/ for details of recent activities, photos and rag-chew times.

4. THE NAQCC ELMER PROJECT:

The Elmer project is co-ordinated by Karl N3IJR (L) and Ron K5DUZ. If you are interested in helping out or need help with any CW and/or QRP matters contact:
K5DUZ - **NAQCCSKED@FLASH.NET**
WY3H - **TJMITCHELLKX3@COMCAST.NET**
N3IJR - pix, email, n3ijr (1K)

Elmer's tip: QRP and 160 meters. I don't want to re-invent the wheel here, so I'll just refer you to my (K3WWP) news item in the Member News section of the newsletter below for this issue's tip.

Many more examples of good overall operating practices can be found on the Elmer Project page of the web site and on K3WWP's Web Site

NAQCC QRS Net Report

Date(UTC)	NCS	Participants
11/29/10	K3WWP	8 - K3WWP K1IEE N8IUP W5IQS WB0QQT VE3FUJ K9OSC KA5TJS
12/6/10	WY3H	8 - WY3H VE3FUJ AC8AP K3WWP K1IEE K3HPS N9RLO K8SRB

We are finally getting some response from members willing to help out with the net. Here is a summary from Tom WY3H who is our net coordinator about what we have now.

1. From KE7LKW: "Wednesday, January 5, 2011 a Pacific Northwest NAQCC low power slow speed net will begin. The time will be 6PM local on Wednesday local evenings on 3575 KHZ. (0200Z ThursdayZ). This will be a QRP QRS round robin ragchew net. It is anticipated that coverage will be possible for Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Northern California, and others depending on propoagation.
Initial NCS will be Stewart KE7LKW running QRP in White Salmon, WA, which is 65 miles east of Portland OR. Portland, Oregon stations without NVIS capability may have difficulty checking in depending on propagation so please ask for a relay if needed.
The call-up will be CQ CQ PNW NQN DE KE7LKW QNI? or similar.
During December 2010 the net will begin in trial form with interum NCS. KE7LKW will be out of town. Please give it a try.
For inquiries please e-mail KE7LKW@Winlink.org (will try to check while on vacation) or stewart@gorge.net. 72 Stewart"

2. Our main NAQCC net frequency is 3575.0 and the net begins at 0130Z (8:30 p.m. EST). We are experimenting with different times and frequencies to find what works best. Check the email notification we send out each Sunday morning for the latest info.

Our call-up for the net is:

CQ NQN DE N3AQC QNI

After that, you send only your call once, and follow the lead of the NCS from there on. After enough folks check in, each will get a turn to make comments, etc.

The net is quite informal and everyone is invited to check in. Remember the use of QRO is permitted for the net (but not for any other NAQCC activities) since increasing code proficiency is so important.

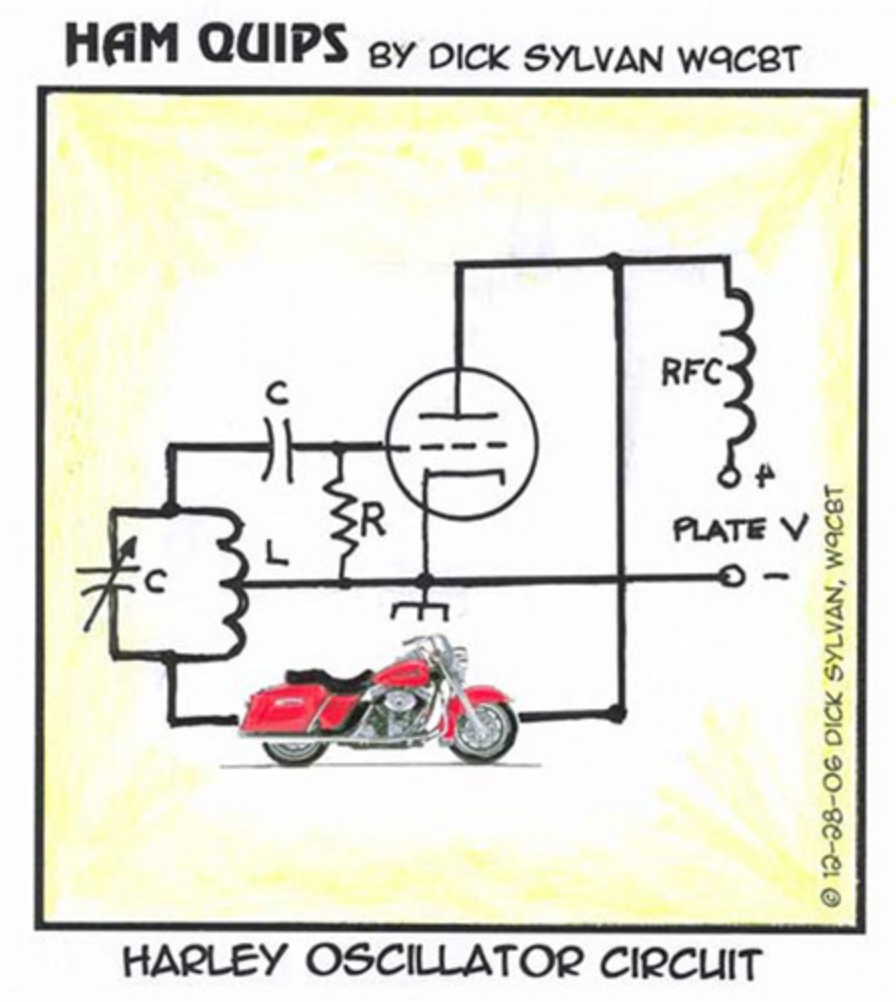
Please contact Tom, WY3H at: **TJMITCHELLKX3@COMCAST.NET** for all matters concerning the net. Do not send them to any other address. We need to have all the info in one place so it can be coordinated properly. Whey you email Tom, request a read receipt to be sure it got to him OK.

We need YOU to make our Elmer project work. If you need help with any ham radio matter or are willing to help others with your expertise, please contact our Elmer directors at the above email address(es).

Also see Elmer Project on the web site.

5. CW CARTOON OF THE MONTH:

Let's take a comedy and/or nostalgia break now courtesy of Dick Sylvan W9CBT. Dick has been a long-time QRP/CW operator. One of his many talents is being a cartoon artist, and he is supplying a cartoon each month for the newsletter. The NAQCC is very honored to be one of just two organizations to feature Dick's cartoons. In addition to our newsletter, Dick's cartoons appear monthly in The K9YA Telegraph, an on-line only Ham Radio E-zine where he is the staff cartoonist. Dick has also authored a book entitled "Hi Hi - A Collection of Ham Radio Cartoons" available via his web site. A new cartoon will be appearing in each of our even-numbered newsletters.



6. MEMBER SPOTLIGHT:

This section is managed by Paul N8XMS and any questions about it should go to PAUL142857@GMAIL.COM. Paul selects members at random and asks them if they would like to be featured in the Member Spotlight in the newsletter.

Wut Srithong HS8JYX #4552

My Nick name Wut. I received first license in 1996 (max 10 watts VHF only} and intermediate license in 2001 (max 200 watts HF). I use this callsign since Sep 03 1998. My first rig is ICOM IC-02N and homebrew antenna.

In Thailand NO Extra Class exam. I don't know why????

See my web site at www.hs8jyx.com for more pictures.

7. NEWS ITEMS AND ARTICLES BY OUR MEMBERS: This section is a forum for you to tell other members what you've been up to on the ham bands or to submit an article dealing with some aspect of CW and QRP operation or equipment. Send your news items and articles to our news editor Paul KD2MX at **KD2MX@ARRL.NET**. Deadline for submitting news items for the next newsletter is December 23. For your convenience any links in this section will open in a new browser window so you can come immediately back here to the newsletter just by closing that extra window.

DISCLAIMER: Any views expressed in this section are those of the member submitting them, and may or may not be those of the NAQCC or its officers.

- **From John K3WWP #0002 -** At one time I was skeptical that QRP and my attic random

wire would do much at all on 160 meters. I always perceived that band as a QRO - big high antenna band. When I tried it in 1995 with my 5 watts and random wire, I proved myself wrong to some extent. Working stations out to 800 miles or so was fairly easy in most cases. In the contests with the good receiving equipment in use at the big contest stations, it was possible to work anywhere in the continental USA, although not all that easy when it came to the west coast W6 and W7 call areas. I now have all but AK HI ID LA MS NV NM WA worked on 160. Maybe if I get time to get on in the upcoming January CQWW 160M contest, I can get a couple of those.

But for now, to further dispel my misconception about QRP and 160, I tried my 930 mW output to my attic random wire in the ARRL 160M contest this past weekend for an hour or so. Well, mW power also works there. I worked 13 states and VE2. About 80% of the QSO's I had to repeat either my call or section, so the QSO's weren't easy, but I made them. I guess the most distant state was GA.

My point is that you shouldn't avoid 160M (or any band for that matter) due to misconceptions about the band. All you need to do is to match your rig to your antenna with a good antenna coupler if necessary, and get on and make 160M QRP QSO's. It will take a little patience at times, but you can do it. It's a really great band that takes one's mind back to the early days of radio when the higher frequencies were thought to be useless. If you get the chance, read the ARRL book, "200 Meters and Down" for a chronicle of the early days of ham radio.

For more about mW work, check out my web site.

- **From Rick AA4W #1628 -** A LIMITED SPACE VERTICAL ANTENNA

My friend and neighbor, Frank, KJ4CBC member #4038, has been looking for a way to operate QRP/PSK (and CW we hope) from his front porch, on the nice afternoons we get here in Florida in the fall. He had experimented with several antennas including a low 20 meter dipole and stacked Ham Sticks, without much success. I mentioned that he should load his flag pole. Franks flag pole is 23 ft. I have had a flag pole, tuned for 20 meters, in my front yard for a number of years. When there was an article in the December QST about using a flag pole as an antenna, we revisited the idea again.

Insulating the antenna from ground was not a problem. Most flag poles come with a fiberglass tube for mounting. As a test we used my Icom AH-4 remote antenna tuner, connected at the bottom and to the six 30 ft. radials, as they did in the article. It worked well. The problem was that Frank didn't want to invest $300 in a tuner to satisfy his front porch operations. (I agree!) He already had a nice MFJ tuner but the vertical needed to be tuned at the antenna feedpoint, not from the porch end of the coax.

After thinking about it a bit I realized that, at 34 ft., the pole was just under a half wavelength on 20 (33'), almost exactly a half wave on 15 (22') and a little longer than half wave on 10 meters (18+'). With the pole being at or near a half wavelength, the feedpoint impedance would be on the order of 4000 ohms. A quick trip to my junk box garnered a 4:1 balun from an earlier G5RV experiment. We attached the balun at the base of the vertical, connecting one side to the pole and the other to the radials. Franks MFJ tuner easily found a 1:1 match on 40, 20, 17, 15, 12 and 10 meters.

The antenna works well. Frank has worked stations in Russia, Europe, South America and throughout the U.S., running QRP/PSK using an IC-703. A $30 balun is sure a cheaper way to get to get a multi-band antenna. (Rick - Get Frank on CW! - K3WWP)

- **From Terry KE5YUM #3102 -** I took the opportunity recently to participate in the CQ World

Wide DX contest, which many of you most likely did. This was the first time I had ever entered a "big time" CW contest, but I wanted to see if I could make contacts with my MFJ 9040, a long wire at 25 feet up in a tree, and a straight key while operating portable from my home.

Well, I set a personal goal of ten QSOs and was able to get eight during the contest, all the while balancing family commitments during the Thanksgiving holiday. It was a lot of fun, very educational, and I hope to do it again next year. Most challenging was trying to decipher call signs with CW signals on top of other signals at a code speed faster than my comfort zone.

Club email address - **NAQCC33@WINDSTREAM.NET**

The publication of our next newsletter will be announced via email to all members for whom we have a valid email address unless you specifically have unsubscribed from the email.

Past on-line newsletters beginning with issue #042 are now archived on the site. So if you missed seeing any past issues, you can check them out in the archives.

Unless otherwise credited, all items are written by K3WWP.

If you came directly to this newsletter, we invite you now to browse the NAQCC Web Site.